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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7361
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3381
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 5780
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 4751
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 3451

UNCLAS RABAT 001421

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SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: MOROCCO ELECTIONS: SITUATION REPORT AS OF 1300 GMT
SEPTEMBER 7

REF: A. RABAT 1419
[1](#)B. RABAT 1408 AND PREVIOUS

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

[1](#)1. (SBU) General parliamentary elections, Morocco's first in five years, are being staged today, September 7. Polling stations opened across the country at 0800 GMT. 10 teams from Embassy Rabat and Consulate Casablanca deployed to the field are reporting apparently light to moderate turnout.

[1](#)2. (SBU) In Kenitra, about 30 KM north of Rabat, The majority of voters sighted in Kenitra appeared to be middle aged and retirees. In rural areas north of Kenitra city, we heard that illiterate voters were arriving advised of which party symbol to choose at the ballot box.

[1](#)3. (SBU) In the Ben Guerir district, roughly mid-way between Casablanca and Marrakech, an Embassy team reported that of several polling stations visited, one in a poor/slum area was the busiest by far. The race in Ben Guerir has gained national and even international attention due to the candidacy of former deputy Interior Minister and royal confidant Fouad Ali Al-Himma.

[1](#)4. (SBU) An Embassy team in Meknes reported an apparently strong turnout with a diverse group of men, women, and youth all lined up to vote. By contrast, a Consulate Casablanca team in Mohammadia reported an apparently light turnout. Most of the voters sighted were women.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Turnout was also reported light in Al-Jadida. There, representatives of the Islamist PJD and leftist USFP approached Consulate Casablanca team to report that the mayor and a councilman of the nearby village of Oulad Frej, both of the nationalist Istiqlal party, were arrested on September 5 distributing money to local residents. The party reps who reported the incident complained that although the mayor and councilman had spent the night in jail, they were released the following day and the corruption charges dropped. They may face a lesser charge in the future.

[1](#)6. (SBU) An Embassy team in Marrakech reported apparently light turnout and a quiet atmosphere. About 15 men and one women were seen waiting to vote at a polling station in a wealthy suburb, and an exclusively male group waiting to vote in a middle class neighborhood. In a working class district, a polling station appeared completely empty of voters.

[1](#)7. (SBU) In the southern port of Agadir, Consulate Casablanca team reports a relatively high turnout. Most voters sighted appeared to be poor and/or working class, roughly equally split between men and women.

18. (SBU) All teams report that turnout is expected to increase after Friday midday prayers, set to end around 1330 GMT.

Visit Embassy Rabat's Classified Website;
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/rabat>

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